

2012 Activity of the Education Commission of the States

Submitted: Tuesday, January 22, 2013

For additional information: Mike Cormack, Policy Liaison- Iowa Department of Education

This is the annual report for the compact for education. Iowa is a member of the Education Commission of the States. The education compact was created in 1965 to improve public education by facilitating the exchange of information, ideas and experiences among state policy makers and education leaders.

Iowa Code 272B.1 establishes the right of Iowa to participate in it and describes in detail how that should be done. Part of that code is listed below in italics and it explains how that structure is created and the reporting requirement of the activity of this group in a given year:

3. Article III — The commission.

a. The education commission of the states, hereinafter called “the commission”, is hereby established. The commission shall consist of seven members representing each party state. One of such members shall be the governor; two shall be members of the state legislature selected by its respective houses and serving in such manner as the legislature may determine; and four shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor, unless the laws of the state otherwise provide. If the laws of a state prevent legislators from serving on the commission, six members shall be appointed and serve at the pleasure of the governor, unless the laws of the state otherwise provide. In addition to any other principles or requirements which a state may establish for the appointment and service of its members of the commission, the guiding principle for the composition of the membership on the commission from each party state shall be that the members representing such state shall, by virtue of their training, experience, knowledge or affiliations be in a position collectively to reflect broadly the interests of the state government, higher education, the state education system, local education, lay and professional, public and nonpublic educational leadership. Of those appointees, one shall be the head of a state agency or institution, designated by the governor, having responsibility for one or more programs of public education. In addition to the members of the commission representing the party states, there may be not to exceed ten nonvoting commissioners selected by the steering committee for terms of one year. Such commissioners shall represent leading national organizations or professional educators or persons concerned with educational administration.*

j. The commission annually shall make to the governor and legislature of each party state a report covering the activities of the commission for the preceding year. The commission may make such additional reports as it may deem desirable.

Currently, the board administrator of the group is Roger Sampson, who can be contacted at rsampson@ecs.org and at the phone of 303-299-3624. Governor Terry Branstad is a member of the group, along with two appointees from his office. The current Governor's appointees are Jason Glass, Director of Iowa Department of Education and Linda Fandel, Educational Advisor to the Governor. Legislators who are involved in the process include Senator Daryl Beall, Fort Dodge, Senator Tod Bowman, Maquoketa, and Representative Josh Byrnes, Osage.

Each year has an unfixed number of meetings that take place in this group. This program is overseen by the federal government with individual state participation. There are no specific requirements of activity of each state, absent having their requirements for membership in state code. Iowa has that in our code and then it is up to program appointees and members to participate in activities as they so desire.

A noteworthy activity of the past year was participation by the legislators in the 2012 ECS Winter Commissioners Meeting in Denver, Colorado in December. There was direct interaction with the ECS team and breakout sessions to

explore various educational topics. In the coming year, the group will meet in St. Louis, Missouri in June with a national forum on educational policy.

At the invitation of the United States Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan and the United States Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, the three legislators participated in a panel meeting. The topic was education and rural economic development, with the idea being that the two concepts are not mutually exclusive. Working together to build better educational systems in rural Iowa will have a hand-in-hand, positive impact on economic development in such areas.

The participation in the national meeting and panel discussion were highlights of activity of the group this past year. The members continue to receive information from the group that is used in deliberating public policy in our state. In working with other states in this long standing organization, it is hoped that both positive and negative experiences in other states in educational policy can be learned from with ultimately better policy decisions in each individual state.

Hopefully, this update will give the reader of this report a better understanding of Iowa's participation in the Education Commission of the States. Please contact individual members listed in this report for more detailed information on the individual activities that they had in this group.